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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (withdrawn) A method for producing soybean powder, comprising the steps of:

subjecting grains or crushed grains of lipoxygenase-free soybeans to heat drying treatment with water vapor having a temperature in a range of 160 to 230°C under atmospheric pressure throughout for a time range of 30 to 300 seconds; and
then mechanically pulverizing the grains into fine particles.

2. (currently amended) A method for producing soybean powder, comprising the steps of:

mechanically pulverizing lipoxygenase-free soybean grains into fine particles; and

then subjecting the fine particles to heat drying treatment with by solely using water vapor having a temperature in a range of 160 to 230°C under atmospheric pressure throughout for a time range of 30 to 300 seconds.

3. (previously amended) A method for producing soybean powder, comprising the steps of:

mechanically pulverizing lipoxygenase-free soybean grains into fine particles;

subsequently subjecting the fine particles to heat drying treatment with water vapor having a temperature in a range of 160 to 230°C under atmospheric pressure throughout for a time

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range of 30 to 300 seconds to form lumps of soybean powder;
and

then forming granules having controlled sizes by placing the lumps in a space defined by two opposing plates having a predetermined distance therebetween, at least one of the plates having a plurality of substantially parallel grooves in the surface thereof, the plates being in a state of relative rotation.

4. (canceled)

5. (canceled)

6. (previously amended) A method for producing soybean powder, comprising the steps of:

preparing a soybean powder material which has been processed into lumps by applying superheated water vapor over fine particles of soybean under an atmospheric pressure in a temperature range of 160-230°C; and

forming granules having controlled sizes by placing the soybean powder material in a space defined by two opposing plates having a predetermined distance therebetween;

wherein each plate has a plurality of parallel grooves on a surface thereof, and at least one of the two plates is rotated.

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7. (original) The method for producing soybean powder according to Claim 6, wherein the grooves have a pitch of 1.5 to 2.5 mm and a depth of 0.20 to 2.5 mm.